

Using profiling systems to support values based recruitment: guidance and matrix

This guide will support social care employers to find profiling systems to support a values and behaviours-based approach to recruitment and retention. It provides help with choosing a system, and includes a matrix of products current as of August 2016.

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Introduction

Research into profiling systems that assess ‘values’ appropriate to social care found there is a wide selection available on the market. They were all considered to be appropriate for their purpose, however some were found to be more relevant to some sectors (e.g. sales or banking), specific job roles (e.g. management or graduates), specific purpose (e.g. recruitment or personal/team development), or offer a specified or combination of tests (e.g. attitude, competence, function, personality or motivation), than others.

Some profiling tools were described as something other than ‘values’ however they appear to be aligned to the values described as appropriate for working in social care¹; others may describe themselves as ‘values’ however may be an adaption or customisation of a previous system or more aligned to other personal ‘qualities’ (e.g. *belief, value and attitude*).

See Example values and behaviours framework for adult social care

For social care it was found there is no one definitive solution for all social care employers. Therefore, it is important that social care employers ask themselves a number of questions before identifying a profiling system of their choice.

These include:

- **What purpose do you need the assessment for?**
- **How much can you afford?**
- **Do you want an on-line or off-line solution?**
- **How quickly do you need a response?**
- **How long/complex do you want the test to be?**
- **What do you want to measure?**

Responding to questions

The following information provides further guidance.

1. What purpose do you need the assessment for?

- **Psychometric tests** are generally used to discover how good someone is at particular skills, such as verbal or numerical reasoning
- **Psychometric profiling** is used to “build a picture” of either an individual or a team, such as identifying their values, personality type or occupational interest. You can read more about this [here](#).

2. How much can you afford?

Costs can vary from £3-£25 per report (to buy a system ‘off-the-shelf’) to £thousands plus (to ‘build’ your own system based on your organisation’s vision and job profiles). If you intend occasional or low volume use it may be more cost effective to consider a payment per assessment report, taking into account scale of economy (costs tend to fall as more are used). Where its intended use is for ‘high volume’ it is likely to be more efficient to buy an annual ‘license’ that may apply to unlimited or restricted use (e.g. up to a stated volume) per annum; most systems providers will offer a six month or annual review with usage or renegotiation based on previous usage, recommended for first time users. Many systems providers offer a ‘free trial’ so don’t forget to ask. Consideration of requirements for training and administration should also be understood, consideration to these two factors are included in “how quickly to you need a response?” below. **All providers of the systems included in the Matrix below are willing to consider a reduced fee for small and third sector employers.**

3. Do you want an on-line or off-line solution?

- **'On-line'** means (usually for off-the-shelf solutions) easily accessed on-line, mostly web-based, no consultancy fees, rapid deployment and quick to use, these are useful for profiling a large number of people.
- **'Off line'** definitely means consultants fees, 'practitioner license' fees and training, but can be more in-depth as the trained consultant/licensee often meets the candidates face to face. Cost is much higher. No unlimited usage licenses available offline.

4. How quickly do you need a response?

Both online and offline affect the speed of response. Online solutions tend to be more immediate, however some systems require a 'trained and licensed practitioner' to 'administer the system' and/or to feedback reports to candidates which is likely to delay the response time. The offline solution is either delivered by the procured consultant or by a licensed practitioner (internal or external), e.g. Myers Briggs. In all cases where there is a 'licence to practice' there will be a fee.

5. How long/complex do you want the test to be?

Personality profiling primarily seeks to understand human commonalities before individual differences or what makes a person unique. As such if there are particular traits that are more appropriate to a sector or job roles the individual reports produced may present similarly where human commonalities occur. Broadly speaking, there are two types of personality tests: *ipsative* and *normative*. *Ipsative* personality tests are designed to measure how job-applicants prefer to respond to, for example, problems, people, work pace and procedures. The 'ipsative' approach does not directly compare a candidate to other people's personality assessment; it's a report solely about them. In contrast, '*normative*' personality tests assess measurable personality characteristics on individual scales and the end score measures characteristics against patterns of pre-defined 'normality' (i.e., are they more or less like 'the norm'). Ipsative tests tend to be shorter than normative and less susceptible to 'social desirability' responses, when a job-applicant attempts to respond to personality related items in a way that reflects them positively but not necessarily accurately.

6. What do you want to measure?

The following types of test provide definition to those included in the matrix below (a wider range of test definitions are included at the base of this guide).

- **Ability:** assesses an individual's ability (skills, talent and proficiency) to do a task or job.
- **Attitude:** assesses how an individual's values translate into behaviours e.g. assesses an individual's 'feelings' about an event, person or object, particularly useful in pre-screening and recruitment situations or as a tool to 'address' inappropriate behaviours.
- **Competence:** used in recruitment or development settings, job applicants or existing staff can be assessed for their ability or capacity to do a particular task or job that is benchmarked against a framework of behaviours, similar to assessing staff to the social care 'Qualifications Credit Framework'.
- **Cognitive:** assesses mental processes that underlie behaviour, including thinking, reasoning, problem solving, decision making, creativity and to some extent motivation and emotion.
- **Emotional Intelligence (EI):** used in recruitment, coaching and development situations, EI assessment measures a person's level of emotional intelligence e.g. how they communicate and relate to others and how they cope in challenging situations and personal stress, factors that may impact on their decision making .
- **Function:** assesses knowledge, skills and attitudes related to a job function, differentiating good bad and indifferent.
- **Motivation:** determines an individual's level of motivation related to a particular job or role. For example it could be used to assess whether any employees are right for taking on a leadership position, or a potential student prior to embarking on a course of education or, in the case of social care, whether an individual has the right motivation to work in a social care environment.
- **Personality:** "a test usually involving a standardised series of questions or tasks, used to describe or evaluate a subject's personality characteristics" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition copyright 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company (2009).

Used in recruitment and retention context it can be used to assess whether a candidate will fit into a job/team or organisation in terms of personality, attitude and work style, areas that may impact on their motivation. Other factors of personality can correlate substantially with non-traditional aspects of job performance such as

leadership and effectiveness in a team environment. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and Thomas International are popularly used in these types of settings.

- **Situational Judgement:** measure the suitability of job applicants by assessing attributes such as problem solving and service orientation, these tests screen for candidates with key attributes and assess their capabilities to perform and respond to job-related situations. Situational Judgement tests are commonly used as employee-selection and employee-screening and have been developed to predict employment success. An example of its use for pre-screening is Skills for Care's "A Question of Care" that has been tested with Job Centre Plus for pre-screening of suitability to the sector; alternatively it can also be used in recruitment as part of a wider recruitment process.
- **Value-Base:** aim to identify whether potential employees/candidates have the right values and behaviours to work in a particular sector, e.g. social care. It enables the employer to gain a 'sense' of how a candidate will treat people, their commitment to a particular sector and their qualities.

Popular psychometric tests

- **Matrix:** The Matrix below sets out psychometric (or other) systems considered to be relevant to social care and is based on the findings of recent research. It should be noted this is not an exclusive list; there are many systems on the market, some of which may be relevant to social care and/or its suitability and purpose for your organisation. Therefore, it is important you carry out your own research when sourcing for an appropriate system to your needs.
- **Relevance to social care:** All systems included in the Matrix below are considered to be '**relevant to social care**' and is intended to facilitate your choice. Please note they are listed in alphabetical order, not in the order of preferred or most appropriate system.
- **Costs:** Cost per license or report are available on request which should be made via the web addresses included in the Matrix below. Please note in all cases a monthly or annual cost per license and a cost per report (low usage) applies.
- **'Help-line' and technical support:** Offered by all system providers below

- **Small and third sector employers:** All providers of the systems included in the Matrix below are willing to consider a reduced fee for small and third sector employers.
- **Other psychometric tests:** Definitions of other popular psychometric tests that are available on the market, not included in the Matrix below, are included at the end of this Guide to facilitate your choice of the most appropriate test to suit the purpose at any given time

System	Measures	Psychological Assessment	Model	Experience in Sector
A Question of Care www.aquestionofcare.org.uk	Situational judgement video case studies and choice of responses to 'what happens next?')	n/a	On-line situational judgement that enables the assessment of suitability of an individual to the care sector. May be used prior to, during and post the recruitment process	Extensive – developed by Skills for Care and Development.
E-Talent Select www.etalent.net/	Behaviour Personality Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personality is normative. ▪ Behaviour is ipsative. ▪ Skills, training etc. collect answers to user-defined questions from the applicant. 	On-line profiling tools – fully automated http://vimeo.com/99630271	Worked in social care e.g. Balhousie Care Group and Bright Care.
McIntyre Profile www.macintyrecharity.org/	Personality Competency, Involving Everyone	Normative, refined for McIntyre, a large employer in the social care sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ On-line personality assessment. ▪ Competency based questions for interview. ▪ People supported and others involved in the process. 	Extensive
Profiles4Care (People Maps) www.profiles4care.com	Personality	Ipsative – tailored to Health and Social Care sectors.	Web-based on-line system with limited in-house administration required. Does not require training, 'license to practice' or consultancy fees.	Systems tested in health & social care via NSA VBRT pilot. NHS experience, Client base : Client base: 100% health & care sector employers'.

System	Measures	Psychological Assessment	Model	Experience in Sector
Psysoft /www.psysoft.com/care	Emotional Intelligence (assesses social and emotional functioning in candidates)	Normative format questionnaire. Reports available include EQ-i 2.0 workplace, leadership, group and EQ 360	Administered via on-line portal. Requires certification training, followed by pay-as-you-go charges per candidate report	Extensive NHS experience
Sticky People (Staff-Sure 'People Clues' Assessments) stickypeople.co.uk	Core measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personality/Job Fit ▪ Workplace Attitude (Safeguarding) Also available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cognitive (IQ) ▪ Candidate On-boarding report ▪ Candidate feedback report 	Normative and offers reports based on 'norms' developed for Health and Care sectors. Sample reports and test links available upon request.	Web-based on-line system with simple in-house administration dashboard 60 minute free training session for employers to get started Benchmarked care profiles include care worker, support worker, nurse and 18 other care roles Limited in-house administration required. Does not require license to practice	Social care, healthcare and child care sectors Award-winning and used in US care sector since 2006, UK since 2012 Client base : 100% care sector employers
Who Cares? www.tests-direct.com/pdf/WhoCares_User_Manual.pdf	Function (relates to job function Values (through situational judgement items)	Normative	Consultancy Web-based on-line system Test-Direct says easy to use. Sells training www.tests-direct.com/products http://www.tests-direct.com/sample-reports/whocares-administrator	Social Care, health and healthcare 2 validation studies carried out. Latest study 2014 www.tests-direct.com/pdf/WhoCares_Validation_Study.pdf

Other types of tests available on the market include:

- **Aptitude:** designed to measure work-related perception, judgement and reasoning. They operate on a principle there is only one correct answer to each test question and that everybody can solve all questions, the only difference between people is how quickly they complete the test. Popular aptitude tests include numerical reasoning, verbal reasoning, spatial reasoning, and mechanical reasoning.
<http://www.psychometricinstitute.co.uk/Psychometric-Test-Guide/Aptitude-Test-Guide.html>
- **Cognitive Ability:** can assess general intelligence and correlate very highly with overall job performance. Individuals with higher levels of cognitive ability tend to perform better in their jobs. This is especially true for jobs that are particularly intellectually demanding.
- **Job-Knowledge tests** : particularly useful when applicants must have specialised or technical knowledge and commonly used in fields such as computer programming, law and financial management
- **Performance Assessment:** is a process to find out if applicants can do the job for which they are applying. Tests are administered and judged by hiring managers who will be supervising the potential new recruit. These assessment tests can be used as a pre-screening tool to test applied knowledge, skills-job match and commitment of the applicant towards the job position.